



March 8, 2022

Waterbury Regional Chamber Statement on *House Bill 5353 An Act Concerning a Fair Work Week Schedule*.

Chairs Senator Kushner and Representative Porter, Vice Chairs Senator Cabrera and Representative Sanchez, and Ranking Members Senator Sampson and Representative Arora, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on *House Bill 5353 AN ACT CONCERNING A FAIR WORK WEEK SCHEDULE*. The Waterbury Regional Chamber, which serves 14 communities in Greater Waterbury and represents the interests of nearly 900 member businesses on matters of public policy, opposes *House Bill 5353*.

House Bill 5353 known as the 'predictive scheduling' bill will impact scheduling in industries such as wholesale, franchises, retail, restaurant, hotels, and residential care facilities. Franchise networks will be hit hardest by this as employment will be counted under the national brand not the local franchise owner. Many family-owned, small business franchises will be unduly penalized with costs and added hurdles to running their brick-and-mortar franchise in Connecticut. Below I have provided some reasons why this legislation is bad for business, employees, and consumers.

Flexible Scheduling is Necessary

- Flexible scheduling benefits employees of all ages and demographics.
- High schoolers working a summer job, college students who may not want to work during final exams, adults looking for part-time work while their children are in school or retirees who enjoy the socialization and want to supplement their income.

Businesses Balance Customer and Employee's Needs

- Flexible scheduling reflects a balance between meeting the needs of customers and honoring the value that employees bring.
- Employers need to be able to respond to the rapidly changing business environment, including peak seasons or special events, where changes to the anticipated schedule are both necessary and unavoidable.

Scheduling is a Complex Process

- Scheduling is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach, but rather a very complex process.

- Scheduling is often built around the availability of employees. In addition to the preferences and availability of employees, other data points are crucial when formulating a schedule, such as: sales forecasts, delivery schedules, breaks, payroll hours, events, and changes in customer volume.
- Unanticipated inclement weather, public events adjacent to or surrounding a store location, or public transit issues are all beyond a business's control and impact scheduling. Living through the pandemic has taught us all that circumstances can change very quickly and are sometimes beyond our control.

Rigid Scheduling Is An Anti-Business and Anti-Employee Mandate

- Employees would have to provide their availability further out, sometimes more than 30 days in advance, which may be a challenge for day care, school schedules and other outside commitments. Some of which may be influenced by the same circumstances impacting employers.
- Employers will be less likely to make changes to their schedule – such as adding hours for employees or accommodating last minute requests – due to penalty pay provisions, costing employee's hours and income, and often resulting in less flexibility.
- The further out schedules are required to be posted, the less accurate the forecasting model becomes at predicting staffing that meet immediate business needs and changing dynamics.

Unintended Consequences Could Bring Additional Adverse Impacts

- To comply with rigid scheduling laws, employers may need to offer fewer hours to current employees due to artificial constraints on the ability to fill open shifts or make changes due to changing business needs.
- Compliance with these laws can have an impact on company culture, potentially limiting open communication between employers and employees.

The Chamber opposes this anti-business legislation. At a time when Connecticut is trying to regain its economic footing, this bill will get in the way of business, job opportunities and further increase costs. I urge you to consider these reasons and oppose *House Bill 5353*.

Thank you for your consideration.

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